

Multiple sclerosis



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Multiple Sclerosis June 13, Multiple Sclerosis Multiple sclerosis is a disease of the nervous system that involves the individual's immune system eating away at the protective covering of one's nerves. As the protective covering of the nerves gradually disappears, the communication between the brain and the rest of the body is damaged (McDonald 18). The nerves deteriorate, but not before the individual experiences excruciating pain throughout their body due to the nerves being exposed. Multiple sclerosis has plagued humanity since the mid-1800s, though doctors and scientists believe that the disease has always been in existence. It was not until 1873 that multiple sclerosis was recognized for what it was, though this was after hundreds of people had already died from the disease. As time went on, doctors began to understand the characteristics associated with multiple sclerosis, which helped them to not only discover causes and treatments, but also allowed them to understand where the disease has been and where it is going. There is no known cause of multiple sclerosis. It is believed, though there is no concrete proof, that the cause of the disease in one person as opposed to another has to do with various factors, such as age, gender, ethnicity, and even the place where the person lives. Though the causes are none, the symptoms and signs of the disease are many. The signs and symptoms are as follows: Tremors or lack of coordination Tingling or pain in random parts of the body Sensations of electric-shock when the head is moved a certain way Partial or complete loss of vision Pain during eye movement Numbness or weakness in certain limbs, though usually located in one-half of the body, either the right or left side, or the top or bottom half To diagnose multiple sclerosis, basic blood tests are first undergone to rule out other infections and diseases that share similar symptoms to multiple sclerosis. A spinal tap

is another diagnostic method used, which helps to show abnormalities associated with multiple sclerosis, like bizarre levels of white blood cells. Magnetic resonance imaging, MRI, is the primary method of diagnosing multiple sclerosis. An MRI can detect lesions caused by loss of myelin to the brain and spinal cord (Waxman 13); though an MRI is used to determine if an individual has multiple sclerosis, it can also help rule out other diseases, like lupus or Lyme disease. The piece of equipment used in an MRI is a giant x-ray machine that allows all of the required organs to be checked out; these organs are dyed to help highlight them during the x-ray. There are numerous MRI techniques, including the MRS, which provides information about the biochemistry of the brain, and DTI, which shows 3-D images of areas of the brain with lesions due to loss of myelin (Olek 59), showing the progression of multiple sclerosis. There is no cure for multiple sclerosis. There are options for treatment, most of which involve treating the individual symptoms. Corticosteroids are used to reduce inflammation that spike during a relapse. Beta interferons and glatiramer are used to slow the progression of multiple sclerosis. Physical therapy and muscle relaxants are given to help a person overcome their pain and be comfortable with doing daily activities. In recent uses, medical marijuana has been prescribed to help with the pain associated with multiple sclerosis. Works Cited McDonald, W. I. Multiple Sclerosis. Boston, MA: Butterworth-Heinemann, 2003. Print. Olek, Michael J. Multiple Sclerosis: Etiology, Diagnosis, and New Treatment Strategies. New York: Springer-Verlag New York, LLC, 2010. Print. Waxman, Stephen G. Multiple Sclerosis as a Neuronal Disease. Burlington, MA: Elsevier Academic Press, 2005. Print.